AREA V - District Reports
Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation District
Quarterly Board Meeting
June 24, 2019

Blue Ridge SWCD       Peter Francisco SWCD
Halifax SWCD          Piedmont SWCD
Lake Country SWCD     Pittsylvania SWCD
Patrick SWCD          Robert E Lee SWCD
Peaks of Otter SWCD   Southside SWCD

BLUE RIDGE SWCD

2019 Area V Envirothon competition at Gentry Farm: 1st place Henry County Team (wearing orange t-shirts, pictured left to right) Back Row: Sadie Perry, Tyler Hylton, Tanner Roach, Billy Fulcher and Bailee Surber – Front Row: Olivia Keaton, Montana Adkins, P.J. Adams, & Dylan Nutter; 2nd place Franklin Co. Team (wearing black t-shirts on right of picture) Back row (left to right): Corrin Woods, Madison Burnette, Autumn Young, and Laura Bobbitt- Front row (left to right): Brooke Foster and Lilyana Torres.

The Area V Envirothon Trophy Quilt is now proudly on display and hanging on the wall of the Henry County Career Academy in Figsboro.

The state Envirothon was held at University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg on May 19-20. Out of a total of seventeen teams, Henry County placed 8th and Franklin County placed 9th.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School MWEE: This spring the Blue Ridge SWCD partnered with Western Virginia Water Authority, Franklin Co. Schools, Ferrum College, and Save Our Streams to instruct nearly 600 eager sixth graders on the biological, chemical and physical characteristic of Powder Mill Creek and how it relates to natural resource conservation. Needless to say, these students enjoyed this outdoor experience.

April 2019: Benjamin Franklin Middle School 6th graders are fascinated with the variety of macroinvertebrates
BLUE RIDGE SWCD, continued

Field work and watershed dam issues have been somewhat normal for this time of the year for the Blue Ridge SWCD with a couple exceptions. The District within the last quarter completed receiving bids for mowing of the watershed dams starting next calendar year and a contractor was chosen.

We also received word that our highest priority watershed dam will likely be rehabbed in the next two years and steps are already being undertaken to hire an engineer and meet with stakeholders. Mowing and grounds maintenance for our watershed dams has also been completed.

In addition, work is being done to finish VACS program projects and prepare for the coming year just like other SWCD’s are doing right now. Participated in the NRCS “Conservation Conversations” workgroup with providing a description of the programs Blue Ridge SWCD has to offer in 2020. We are also trying to recruit and complete practices in our septic TMDL grant and plan for the upcoming farm tour.

HALIFAX SWCD

Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District cohosted the Area V Envirothon April 25th at The Gentry Farm in Ringgold, VA. There were five teams in the competition.

Halifax SWCD participated in the Halifax Earth Day Extravaganza on April 27th. We conducted a rain barrel workshop and made edible soil profiles with children.
HALIFAX SWCD, continued

Southside, Lake Country and Halifax SWCDs just wrapped up this year’s Watershed Adventure Camp. This year there were 18 students. They all had a fun filled week learning more about their environment, watersheds, wildlife, local history and so much more. Pictured is the students from Halifax with their certificates.

PEAKS OF OTTER SWCD

Peaks paid out over $142K for three FY 15 backlog SL-6 projects during our 4th quarter. This leaves only nine backlog projects to go totaling a bit over $900K! We are hopeful that our remaining backlog projects will be completed before the close of the calendar year! Bedford County has also seen record CREP sign-up. We have 20 CREP cost-share contracts totaling over $109K. With weather playing a huge role in contractor work this past fall, Peaks is anxiously waiting for everyone to play catch-up and get some work on the ground.
PETER FRANCISCO SWCD

Education

April was a busy month with a career fair at Buckingham County High School, our annual Dinner Meeting and Awards Banquet was held on April 2\textsuperscript{nd} with 107 in attendance, third grade science field day and sixth grade MWEE for Cumberland Elementary and Middle Schools, 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade field day and 1\textsuperscript{st} grade soil baby/tunnel programs at Buckingham Primary and a macroinvertebrate program for 3 classes of Buckingham High School Ecology students. The District had teams from Buckingham and Cumberland County High Schools competing at the Area V Envirothon. Buckingham placed third and went on to compete at the state level.

In addition to exhibiting at Buckingham’s community Mayfest, the District participated in two field days for Cumberland preschoolers/first graders and helped judge the Science Fair as well as organize/participate in a sixth grade MWEE field day for Buckingham Middle School.

We also had a 5-minute program on WFLO Radio. The District participated in the State Envirothon Competition and provided 2 programs for Special Ed students at Holiday Lake 4-H Center.

The District teamed up with Virginia Cooperative Extension again to host its annual Environmental Camp May 28-30. Sixth graders from Buckingham and Cumberland wrote reflective essays on their yearlong MWEE courses and from those essays students were awarded a scholarship to attend our Watershed Exploration Camp. Here are highlights of the camp:

- Field trip with Chesapeake Bay Foundation at the Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach. Boarded a 40-foot boat and performed water quality monitoring, trawled for fish, pulled up crab and eel pots and explored marshlands in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center tour and Marine Mysteries program
- Afternoon swimming and cooking out at the Atlantic Ocean
- Canoeing and team building at Jamestown 4-H Center

In June, the District provided 8 summer school programs and 3 summer camp programs throughout Buckingham and Cumberland.
PIEDMONT SWCD

Legislative Tour
In partnership with the VASWCD Legislative Committee, the Piedmont SWCD hosted a successful tour for the Secretary of Natural Resources and Deputies, DCR Director, Deputy Secretary of Forestry, and VDACS Director. The event consisted of a presentation about the many roles of Virginia SWCDs as well as their funding needs, followed by a farm tour of a producer who is a past recipient of the Piedmont SWCD Conservation Farmer Award.

Education and Outreach
The District awarded 2 Youth Conservation Camp scholarships and 4 educational scholarships to students pursuing higher education degrees in conservation-related fields. The poster contest, “Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper,” had great participation with over 330 entries from local students. Staff assisted at the State Envirothon at the University of Mary Washington.

Watershed Dams
The District hosted an Emergency Planning Table Top Exercise with Prince Edward County and the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries. Piedmont SWCD assisted with 11 Professional Engineering dam inspections.

VCAP
Two staff (Deanna Fehrer and Emily Gibbs) have received the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) Level 1 certification. The CBLP program is a “voluntary credential system for professionals who design, install, and maintain sustainable landscapes. The credential training and examination are based on a core set of standards in sustainable landscaping emphasizing stormwater retrofit best practices and conservation landscaping with native plants to benefit the environment.”

Poster contest winners from Full Circle Schools in Prince Edward County
SOUTHSIDE SWCD

Education Report:
Southside SWCD participated in the Halifax SWCD Youth Day at Edmunds Park on Friday, April 5th. There were 130 6th graders that rotated to stations to learn about numerous agriculture and environmental resources. Southside SWCD used the Enviroscape models to show the students about erosion, run-off, pollution and how to combat those issues in community.

Southside SWCD staff helped with the Area V Envirotthon held at Gentry Farm in Pittsylvania County on April 25th.

Southside SWCD had a booth at the Charlotte County Master Gardener’s Flora Fest on Saturday, May 3rd. Hand painted flower pots and habitat houses were sold.

Southside SWCD conducted a program for the new Master Gardener’s class at the Charlotte County Extension Office on May 7th.

Southside SWCD had a booth at the Herb Faire in Evergreen on Saturday, May 18th. Hand painted flower pots and habitat houses were sold.

Southside SWCD has been very busy for the past month preparing programs and coordinating the annual Watershed Adventure Camp. The camp was held the week of June 10-14 at the Staunton River Battlefield State Park in Clover, VA with 17 participants from Charlotte County, Halifax County, Brunswick County and Mecklenburg County. This is a yearly joint-project with Halifax SWCD and Lake Country SWCD.

Dam Safety Table Top Exercise: Southside SWCD held their 6-year mandatory table- top exercise at the gym at Southside Virginia Community College on Wednesday, April 3rd. There were participants from the local government, fire and rescue, concerned citizens and weather service. Everyone enjoyed being a participant and afterwards, a delicious catered lunch.

ESC Program
During the last 3 months, Southside SWCD has conducted an inspection of one project, attended a pre-construction meeting and revisited a barrow site construction.

VACS Program
Southside SWCD is winding down the FY19 VACS year and preparing for the FY20 year.

NO-TILL drills
All three of the drills owned by Southside SWCD have been very busy the past few months.

Respectfully submitted,
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